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SUBJECT: Haiti Earthquake: One Week Later

REF: PORT A 0054; PORT A 0058; PORT A 0060

¶1. (U) Summary. Seven days after the earthquake, search and rescue teams continued to conduct live rescues in Port-au-Prince. The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) has released a food assistance plan for Haiti, detailing anticipated needs and response. Representatives from USAID's Disaster Assistance Response Team (USAID/DART) returned from a trip to Carrefour Feuilles - a neighbor of Port-au-Prince. The team reported that, although last week's earthquake caused widespread death and destruction in the area, a degree of normalcy has returned for earthquake survivors, with shops reopening and people walking the streets. End Summary.

SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS

¶2. (U) To the surprise of many, urban search and rescue (USAR) teams continued to perform live rescues one week after the earthquake struck. On January 19, U.S. USAR teams rescued two young children from the rubble, who survived seven days without food or water. In addition, just before midnight on January 19, U.S. USAR teams assisted a French team in the extrication of a Haitian woman from a collapsed supermarket in Port-au-Prince's Bois Verna neighborhood.

¶3. (U) Due to new reporting of old rescues, on January 19, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team upward revised the number of total rescues in Haiti to 122 people, including the most recent U.S. and French rescues.

¶4. (U) To date, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) has provided more than \$36 million in support of American search and rescue teams deployed to Haiti, in addition to annual funding for the fire departments of Fairfax and Los Angeles counties for USAR activities.

STORAGE OF RELIEF COMMODITIES

¶5. (U) According to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participating in the U.N. Shelter/Non-food Item Cluster lead, finding adequate storage for relief items is becoming increasingly difficult, due to security concerns and the planned reopening of several businesses in Sonapi, an industrial area in Port-au-Prince currently used for relief supplies. NGOs note that, although the reopening of factories is a positive development that contributes to post-earthquake economic recovery, few locations currently exist that provide similar security and storage capacity.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

¶6. (U) WFP, a partner of USAID's Office of Food for Peace, estimates that up to 2 million people require food assistance in Haiti. Prior to the most recent natural disaster, an estimated 1.8 million Haitians were reported to be food insecure. Note: WFP's estimated 2-million person total caseload includes both food-insecure and earthquake-affected populations.

¶7. (U) At present, WFP is distributing three to five-day rations of high-energy biscuits (HEBs) and meals ready-to-eat (MRE) to affected populations. The recently released WFP Emergency Operation (EMOP) for Haiti (a food assistance plan) indicates that earthquake-affected populations have limited access to storage, cooking facilities, and clean water - necessitating the provision of food that does not require preparation.

¶8. (U) Following the one-week emergency ration, WFP will transition to 60 days of general food distribution - using food-for-work activities, when possible, to rehabilitate streets and public buildings. In the coming month, WFP also expects improved access to affected neighborhoods, increased water tankering, and the provision of shelters and kitchen sets to support a transition to dry rations in some neighborhoods and community kitchens in others.

¶9. (U) According to unofficial tallies, between January 14 and 19, the WFP distributed food to nearly 200,000 beneficiaries in earthquake-affected areas. However, official WFP reports for the same time period indicate a lower beneficiary number of approximately 135,500 people.

¶10. (U) On January 18, the WFP delivered food to a total of 77,841 beneficiaries in earthquake-affected areas, including 57,259 people in Leogane, nearly 10,000 people Cite Soleil, 7,056 people in Cazeau, and 3,538 people in Jacmel. On January 19, although nearly 9,900 people in and around Jacmel received food assistance, WFP was unable to deliver food to a significant portion of the planned caseload in Port-au-Prince and Carrefour, principally due to a lack of trucks. Note: Food delivery in Jacmel has been facilitated by U.S. Military aerial transport; on January 19, U.S. Department of Defense Black Hawks conducted six sorties from the Port-au-Prince airport to Jacmel, delivering eight metric tons of food to WFP for forward distribution.

¶11. (U) To temporarily resolve WFP's transportation issues, USAID/OFDA has contracted six large dump trucks and drivers for 15

days to be used for food distribution. On January 20, WFP intended use the USAID/OFDA-provided trucks to distribute food for 104,665 beneficiaries in and around Port-au-Prince. However, the U.N. Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was unable to provide sufficient security escorts. Therefore, WFP is not expected to reach the targeted beneficiary caseload for January 20. WFP indicated that the USAID/OFDA-provided trucks will be utilized, starting January 21, as long as security escorts are available.

VISIT TO CARREFOUR FEUILLES

¶12. (SBU) On January 19, USAID/DART members traveled to observe several of the scheduled WFP food distributions in and around Port-au-Prince (ref: paragraph 11). In a discussion with USAID/DART staff, WFP relayed anecdotal evidence of problems encountered at recent food distributions. The most pronounced incident was on one in which, WFP arrived ill prepared for a food distribution in Carrefour Feuilles, one of Port-au-Prince's southernmost neighborhoods. Due to inaccurate information, WFP transported commodities for 5,000 people, but 20,000 people arrived to collect food rations. To resolve the situation, WFP reduced the per person ration from a five-day supply to a three-day supply.

¶13. (SBU) USAID/DART members report that the earthquake "decimated" most of the neighborhood - observing few houses that appeared to be inhabitable. In addition, the team reported that bodies of the deceased have been placed in stacks along the streets, with animals beginning to feed on some of them. However, despite the visible damage and casualties in Carrefour Feuilles, USAID/DART members reported that the area seemed to be returning to some degree of normalcy, observing individuals bathing on the side of the road and children playing kickball in the street, in addition to several open markets and stalls along the sidewalk.
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